

Letters To The Editor

The Role Of CIA

Editor the Star::

Mr. Welles, in the New York Times Service article carried in the Star May 11, is not specific as to the type of executive order Mr. Nixon might issue to define and strengthen the role of CIA, in the projected foreign intelligence reshuffle.

As a former denizen of Washington, with over 25 years association with foreign intelligence, I shall venture a few comments on Mr. Welles' article.

First of all, I hope that the idea of establishing a Department of Intelligence is junked. Effective handling of foreign intelligence does not require another monolithic structure in Washington. Bigness is no substitute for effectively delegated authority, clearly understood procedures and objectives, and professional competence. Mr. Welles notes that as an alternative to a new department, the authority and responsibilities of CIA might be realigned and strengthened. I believe that this would be the correct action to take.

In the years since 1947, when CIA came into existence, the foreign intelligence effort of the United States has grown tremendously in sophistication and effectiveness, and CIA has been at the center of all this development. There have, of course, been growing pains and problems. If there had not been Mr. Nixon would not now be looking for reorganization.

If it is fair to single out a whipping boy we must pick on the intelligence effort of the military services. The conceptually sound idea of establishing the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and charging it with the responsibility for making coherent sense out of the gallimaufry created by G-2, ONI, and A-2 foundered on a technical loophole and entrenched greed.

The technical loophole was that, in addition to each service contributing to the foreign intelligence effort of DIA, each was also permitted to develop, for itself, "Departmental Intelligence": information necessary for each to develop and use its own weaponry to maximum advantage. Unfortunately, as competition for money and individual recognition has grown, so has the predilection of the services, encouraged too often by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to pay more attention to their own needs than to the central effort represented by DIA.

It appears that at this juncture DIA hasn't the muscle to battle the Joint Chiefs, and so long as there are so many military officers in DIA, with their fitness reports being written by their own services, no amount of paper work will make this different. The practical alternative is to turn over to CIA most of the functions assigned to DIA, accompanied by a very firm presidential charter as to the authority vested in its director and the level of cooperation expected from others in the foreign intelligence field.

I am sure that there is not space here to describe what some of these functions are, but they are quite simple and could be effectively carried out by an organization with the experience and professional competence of CIA. The alternative, a Department of Intelligence, would be subject to such a variety of conflicting ideas and growing pains that it would all too probably, unwittingly, recreate some of the mistakes we are now trying to get away from.

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KUP'S COLUMN

THE WASHINGTON WHIRL: The flap last week over conflicting intelligence reports from the Defense Department and CIA on Russian missiles wound up as a tempest in a teapot. But President Nixon now is giving thought to putting the intelligence agencies of the Defense Department, CIA and National Security Council under one management to avoid similar harum-scarum incidents. . . . Sen. Ed Muskie (D-Me.) has decided on a September date to announce he's officially a presidential candidate.